

**Graduate Students' Association
Annual General Meeting Draft Agenda**



University of Saskatchewan
Tuesday, April 28th, 2015
5:00 P.M. – 7:00 P.M.
GSA Commons

Call to order

1.0 Approval of the Agenda

2.0 Auditor's report

3.0 Approval of January 12th Special General Meeting Minutes (Attached)

4.0 Ratification of new Academic Councils

4.1 Chemistry Council Ratification (John Hayes/Steven Langdon).

4.1.1 WHEREAS the Chemistry Course Council has met all requirements to be registered as an Academic Council,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Chemistry Course Council be ratified as an Academic Council of the GSA.

5.0 Ratification of new Academic Representatives

6.0 Ratification of new Social Groups

7.0 Executive Annual Reports

7.1 President Report (Report forthcoming)

7.2 VP Finance Report (Report available online at <http://goo.gl/7foqqz>)

7.3 Aboriginal Liaison Report (Report attached)

7.4 VP Operations Report (Report attached)

7.5 VP Academic Report (Report attached)

7.6 VP Student Affairs Report (Report attached)

7.7 VP External Report (Report attached)

7.8 Q&A

8.0 Motion

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the audit for the 2014/15 fiscal year be conducted by Buckberger Baerg & Partners LLP.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Buckberger Baerg & Partners LLP be appointed as GSA Auditors for the 2015/16 fiscal year in accordance with the Non-Profit Corporations Act.

9.0 Motion (Marco Milani/Bassey Bassey)

WHEREAS Policy 2.1.3.3 states that: “Nomination Forms must be signed by: i) A nominator and a seconder ii) The nominee iii) 5 supporting GSA members.”

WHEREAS the nomination forms for the GSA 2015 elections did not have a seconder.

WHEREAS some concerns were raised regarding the possible liabilities the GSA could face due to this irregularity in the procedures.

WHEREAS the Chief Electoral Officer has conducted an investigation on the matter.

WHEREAS the Chief Electoral Officer has determined that this oversight has not influenced the outcome of the GSA 2015 Elections.

WHEREAS the Chief Electoral Officer had no access to any legal consultation on the matter without the approval of GSA Council.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the GSA condones this procedural irregularity in the conduct of the GSA 2015 Elections.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the GSA approves the results of the GSA 2015 Elections.

10.0 Introduction of New Executives.

11.0 Elections of VP Operations and Communications.

12.0 Motion

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the proposed 2015/16 GSA budget be adopted (budget available at <http://goo.gl/w3fZTH>).

13.0 Adjournment

GSA Aboriginal Liaison/Indigenous Graduate Students' Council Annual Report

The Aboriginal and Indigenous Graduate Students' Council (AIGSC) held its AGM in October. The name of the council was changed to Indigenous Graduate Students' Council (IGSC), and Annie Battiste and I were elected the Co-Chairs of this council, and Omeasoo Butt and Jed Huntley are Executive Council Members. I was elected by the IGSC to be the Aboriginal Liaison on the GSA Executive.

The IGSC and the Aboriginal Liaison exist to represent, serve and support the academic and non-academic needs of Aboriginal and Indigenous graduate students within the University of Saskatchewan. It is our vision to offer our members opportunities to get involved in academic, social and political realms on campus and within the broader community, promote Indigenous advancement and worldview, provide a voice for Indigenous graduate students, and forward the goal of decolonization within the University.

GSA Events

The IGSC and I were involved in many GSA events throughout the year such as the orientation, conference, and awards gala. The IGSC offers support to the GSA and other GSA Executives in many ways and will continue to do so in the upcoming academic year to ensure that there is an Aboriginal graduate student presence on campus and ensure that Aboriginal content and issues are included in activities and events.

Mandatory Native Studies Courses

The IGSC is a member of the Aboriginal Student Leadership Group (ASLG) on campus. We had many discussions throughout the year with senior administration that Native Studies be made mandatory across campus. The ASLG has been encouraged to lobby individual colleges and departments to implement these changes. The ASLG suggested that Native Studies should work in collaboration with the colleges as they attempt to Indigenize their respective programs and colleges to ensure Aboriginal history and world view is incorporated into their course content.

Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre

I attended a tour/walk-through of the Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre building in January. Since the building is smaller than anticipated and there are not as many offices as there are Aboriginal student leadership groups on campus, there will possibly be bookable office space for Aboriginal student leaders, as well as bookable meeting space for Aboriginal student groups. The construction of the Student Centre is schedule to be completed this fall.

IGSC Meet and Greet Potluck, Miayasin Potluck, & Wine and Cheese Night

The IGSC hosts two potlucks each year in Term 1, and one wine and cheese night in term 2, with the purpose of recruiting new members and providing networking opportunities so that students, staff, faculty, and community members can meet and discuss the goals of the IGSC. We met with many Aboriginal graduate students and discussed what the IGSC does and how students can get involved. Other supporters of the IGSC, such as staff, faculty, undergraduate students, and colleagues also attended our events to meet and network with Aboriginal graduate students.

Aboriginal Graduate Student Meet & Greet with Aboriginal Undergraduate Students

Each fall the IGSC meets with Aboriginal undergraduate students to discuss what graduate studies is and answer any questions that they may have. We also invite Aboriginal staff and faculty to attend the event and provide an opportunity for discussion of opportunities for Aboriginal students to pursue graduate studies at the University of Saskatchewan.

Aboriginal Achievement Week

The IGSC hosted an event during Aboriginal Achievement Week. We showed the fourth episode from the 8th Fire series. Approximately 30 undergraduate and graduate students as well as staff and faculty from departments all across campus attended the event. The IGSC also purchased tickets for the Indigenous Student Council Gala in order for Aboriginal graduate students to attend. GSA Executives also attended this event with the IGSC to support the achievements of Aboriginal students on campus.

Aboriginal Graduate Student Bursary

The IGSC gave out our first bursary to Aboriginal graduate students this year. IGSC used funds raised from the 2014 annual Steak Night Fundraiser to provide the bursary. The bursary was available to Aboriginal graduate students (First Nations, Metis, and Inuit), and was based on leadership and contributions to community building. We received many great applications and it was a very difficult decision for the selection committee. The selection committee consisted of two IGSC members, one Aboriginal faculty, and one GSA Executive member. In the 2015/2016 year we hope to secure funding so that we are able provide at least two bursaries in each term, with one based on financial need and one based on leadership and involvement in the community.

Aboriginal Awareness Seminars

The IGSC and I held two Aboriginal Awareness Seminars with a soup and bannock lunch. The GSA and IGSC sponsored the events. Each event had approximately 30-40

attendees, including undergraduate and graduate students, staff and faculty, as well as members from the community. Bob Badger, Cultural Coordinator for the University of Saskatchewan, led our first seminar which was focused on Aboriginal peoples and cultural protocols. Verna St. Denis, professor in the Educational Foundations in the College of Education, led our second seminar which was focused on race, racism, and how race plays a role within Canadian society.

Annual Steak Night Fundraiser

The IGSC held our annual Steak Night Fundraiser on April 2nd. We received an overwhelming amount of support for our fundraiser in the form of prize donations, money donations to buy tickets for Aboriginal students to attend, and ticket sales. We sold 120 tickets to the event and attendees included undergraduate and graduate students, staff and faculty, friends, family, and colleagues. With the funds raised we will be able to continue to host various events on campus to engage graduate students, subsidize costs so that students are able attend events on campus and in the community, and provide a bursary to Aboriginal graduate students.

The IGSC continues to increase the council's visibility and have gained a lot of support in the past year. We have recruited new council members this year, and will work towards working more Aboriginal graduate students to be a part of the council in the 2015/2016 academic year. Our AGM and elections will be held in September.

VP Operations and Communications Report

Communications

One of the first things in communications tasks was the electronic forms for information submission, such as GSA Bursary application, GSA staff and volunteer position application, U-Pass opt out, and Social Group, Council and Councillor ratification. With the help of the FluidSurveys platform on the University website, the online submission tools has worked efficiently to help optimize the collection of information, and more importantly, it saved a significant cost of printing in the office.

This year, a number of meetings as well as major events—the GSA Fall Orientation, the Holiday Season Celebration, the Academic Freedom Event, the GSA Conference, the GSA Gala, the Images of Research photography and imaging competition, and Executive elections—required a considerable amount of outreach to students for a wider participation from graduate students in our events. With the help from the CGSR, the GSA President and the GSA staff, all events were well publicized via posters, contacting media, emails, PAWS announcements, and social media announcements.

GSA Commons

With substantial help from the President, the GSA Commons took on a new look. A number of new furniture and decorations were installed to add warmth to the specialty and beauty of the Chapel. Making the space more welcoming and healthy is the freshly made fruit infused water provided every day in addition to our free coffee and tea. With more students coming to use the space, the GSA Commons has continued to receive positive feedback.

GSA Bursary

With the help from a number of Councillors sitting on the Bursary Selection Committee, three rounds of GSA Bursary selection were held this year. Over 70 students applied for the bursary for each round of the Bursary. The Spring and Summer term bursary distributed 10 bursaries to students in need of financial help. With the generous help from the CGSR, the bursary in Fall and Winter terms were able to help 10 more students in each round. In total, this year 50 students were receiving financial help through the GSA bursary to complete their research and studies here in their graduate programs in University of Saskatchewan.

Staff

With the enormous help from the GSA Administrator, the GSA office has been fortunate to have hired dedicated and hardworking coordinators as our staff. The success of the GSA events this year cannot leave the office coordinators and volunteers.

VP Academic Annual Report

Academic Advocacy

I have been actively involved with graduate students' advocacy. Most of the cases were from course work, academic misconduct, social media misconduct, lack of proper information, and supervisor-students relationships. One of the advices, I have learned throughout my working experience, particularly for international students, that students should try to solve their issues informally with their supervisor and department. In most cases students did not have enough ideas how to deal with formal allegations, and they faced many difficulties. I used to share successful examples with our grad students. Many of the grad students got benefitted from this.

However, there were number of challenges I had to face during last year: first, as VP Academic it was difficult to deal many cases at a time; second, since I was voting member in various committee, I was not able to advocate for students; third, in some cases I found I do not have sufficient knowledge on the particular issue, and there was no support except university; finally, once student (formal allegation) academic misconduct case got filed from department, most students felts scared and helpless. In these situations, I suggested that students must need to get other supports (i.e., counselling, financial, foods, cultural, and peer group support). I am happy that I have seen many successful cases, and we need to work together to overcome challenges.

Various Jobs Related Workshops

I have organized various industry talks with UofS Student Employment and Career Centre (SECC) throughout the year, IndustryTalks brought representatives from various industries of Saskatchewan's and Canada's economy on campus to talk to students about their industry, career opportunities, the realities of working in that industry, how best to conduct students job search and much more. However, throughout the year, communication with graduate students was main challenge for me regarding these workshops. Hope in future, GSA can overcome such unexpected challenges.

Antiracism workshops

I have organized various kinds of anti-racism workshop with Student Teacher Anti-racism Society (STARS). However, the communication and funding from GSA were main barriers that I was not able to offer other important workshops for grad students.

Fighting for affordable tuition fees

Since the affordable is a continuous process, I have tried to bring this issue in various administrative meetings and activities. For example, Research, Scholarly and Artistic Work Committee (RSAW), President Breakfast meetings, Academic Program Committee (APC), and so on. I also joined various campus and off campus-based increase tuition fees demonstrations rallies, postering, and social media.

GSA Conference 2015

This year's GSA -2015 Conference *Curiosity* was organized on the March 4th-6th, 2015. Although this year we had half conference budget (i.e., the UofS President's Fund) from 2013-2014 academic year, our conference was one of the successful events in the UofS GSA history. The conference was organized with the intention to bring together graduate students from as many diverse programs as possible. We had over 110 student presentations, about 20 faculty speakers and over 270 participants, from a number of different departments. The conference gave an opportunity to all student participants to deliver a presentation that was appealing to a very general audience and made them the experts in the room as they were presenting in an interdisciplinary setting. Many of the students who participated in the conference, reported that they found the experience very valuable both academically and socially and expressed their hope to see this conference repeated annually. In addition to bringing presenters together, the conference connected a number of volunteers whose help was instrumental in the success of the conference.

VP Student Affairs Report

It has been an honour and a privilege to serve as your Vice President Student Affairs for the year 2014-15. It has also been a huge learning experience meeting senior leaders at our university, learning decision making processes within and beyond the GSA and above all, helping our members succeed in their life at university through non-academic advocacy and services. Within my portfolio, I consider this a very successful year for student affairs for graduate students. Some new initiatives were taken and some results were delivered as well.

GSA Fall Orientation 2014

The GSA successfully conducted its welcoming event for incoming graduate students. This year, the GSA tried several new things. A few highlights were:

- The BBQ was kept alcohol-free for more inclusive participation.
- The menu was made healthier with emphasis on salads and juices in addition to beef and vegetarian burgers.
- The GSA tried to strengthen an aboriginal presence at the event by having an Aboriginal welcome.
- There was considerable effort in internationalizing the event – an international dance music playlist was prepared and performers from various ethnic organizations and a dance academy were invited for the event.

I would personally like to thank everyone who participated in the event. From over 50 volunteers to over a 1000 in attendance, this event would not have been successful without your support. A mention for FMD and the USSU is also in order, for their logistic support at the Bowl. A special thanks to the GSA executives as well – their mentorship, feedback and encouragement on the day of the event was heartening. A detailed orientation report with the budget has been prepared and is available on the GSA Student Affairs blog online and shall be given to the incoming executive moving forward.

GSA Winter Orientation 2015

The GSA had a successful orientation for incoming students in the Winter 2015 term. GSA Vice President Academic and I along with the College of Graduate Studies and Research (CGSR) organized an information session for graduate students on services available for graduate students. Following the more formal orientation, I organized a Winter Welcome event – Board Games Night. There were lots of board games and playing cards on the GSA Commons tables – Hokm, Uno, 29, Dutch Blitz, Chess, Poker, Dominos, Cards against Humanity, Scrabble – you name it! Free food and subsidized alcohol was available as well.

A big thank you goes out to everyone who participated in the event – especially a lot of incoming students. It was perhaps one of the most successful and well-attended events at the GSA Commons in the year.

Sexual Assault Policies

I was proud to be affiliated with the Coalition of Sexual Assault (CASA), an activist group on campus consisting of students, faculty and concerned members of the community. Together, we discuss the need for sexual assault policies and procedures on campus including but not limited to the possibilities of setting up a sexual assault centre on campus for advocacy, support and education on cases of sexual misconduct on campus and beyond. Currently, the university, under the leadership of Patti McDougall is working on drafting sexual assault policies for students, faculty and staff on campus. Two town halls on the subject have already happened in the last week of March. The plan tentatively is to roll them out before students come in Fall 2015.

Child care

The Board of Governors finally approved construction of a Childcare facility next to Souris Hall at McEown Park. I sat on the university's Childcare Steering Committee and has been working closely with senior administration and advocating for a dedicated number of spots for graduate students and Indigenous students. This advocacy needs to continue in the coming year until the facility is finally contracted out.

Residence

The GSA has actively liaised this year with Consumer Services to bring increased transparency in issues pertaining to Residence. With the support of Residence Operations Manager Amal Awini, some positive changes have been made at the residence this year onwards:

- Timely communication of rule changes for residents – drastic changes shall be communicated to GSA VP Student Affairs before general communication is sent out.
- A shortened, simplified lease document and annual renewals.
- Standardization of services across residences – free wi-fi, cable TV in Assiniboine and Wollaston Hall lounges.
- Periodic data sharing on the amount of vacancies in the residence. A sample has been attached in the appendices.
- Rule changes that concern students shall also be communicated to the GSA VP Student Affairs before the general communication goes out to all residents.
- A Garden Committee to look at the feasibility of student-run gardening next year.

- The Residence Office has agreed to hold town halls in each residence in the coming year to directly address resident concerns.

In a first, I spoke at a training session for new Residence Assistants. This was a great opportunity to speak about GSA's services to students on residence and to seek collaboration opportunities for future programming on residence. I also advocated for having a town hall that could help residents express their concerns to the Residence Office. The residence had its first meet and greet event on December 2nd 2014 at Marquis Hall to hear feedback from students in university housing. With some good treats and door prizes (including an iPad), it was a productive session for both the residence and students.

Student Forum 2014-15

With GSA Councillors Seth Dueck (Physics) and Isaac Pratt (Anatomy and Cell Biology), the GSA Aboriginal Liaison and I were graduate student representatives at the university's student forum.

This year, the discussions revolved around giving recommendations on the results of the campus climate survey, improving the international student experience, discussing alternative ways of scheduling and timetabling classes (non-traditional times, crash courses etc.) and ways of institutionally dealing with sexual assault.

Parking

On feedback from graduate students, a major concern has been the issue of limited space of parking at the residences at McEown Park and the recent hike in parking costs.

As member of the Parking Advisory Committee on campus, I advocated for the following:

- It was agreed that parking spots shall be further increased at the U-Lot, the Williams Building and the parking space outside the GSA Commons.
- Need-based bracketing of parking spots at the U-Lot was also implemented (especially for families)
- The process of obtaining parking permits will now be made online and queue-based.

A strategic plan for parking on campus given newly approved constructions on campus is needed. I advocated for students to be involved in this plan as part of an academic project in their academic programs or a feasibility study. Do look forward to a call for students on the same in the future.

A few graduate students requested that free parking be made available for graduate students who usually have research work during the night for safety and more convenient access during the winter months. For the same, I met with Parking Services and advocated for the safety of graduate students. A campus map was worked on to find strategic parking lots that would serve

most research-intensive laboratories. Free night parking at designated parking areas has now been approved for graduate student use.

U-Lot parking at the university residences has seen the highest number of incidents (99) this year. I advocated for improved lighting (switching to LEDs as recommended by SaskPower), clear pathways, upgrading security cameras and strategic tree trimming. A CPTED report that surveyed better lighting options across parking lots on campus has also been reviewed.

The Global Connections (GC) Lounge

A lot of graduate students felt they did not know where to go for logistic support to organize events if they were not ratified as a student club. I raised these concerns at meetings with the International Student and Study Abroad Centre (ISSAC).

As part of the mandate for ISSAC, the GC Lounge and Training Room is now a center for internationalization on campus for students (international and domestic), faculty and staff. The lounge has the student association office, a training room, two kitchen spaces and a comfortable, welcoming atmosphere. This space is now available for any student group on campus for FREE to hold events like a salsa lesson, foreign film festival, academic talks and various international celebrations.

U-Pass Refund / Transit Lockout

It was a difficult time for students during the Saskatoon transit lockout in September and October. In conversations with university administration including the Assistant Registrar Jason Doell, SESD, Financial Services and the USSU – I advocated for reassessment of the U-Pass fee and how the amount should be returned to graduate students with minimum hassle.

In conclusion, I feel confident that at the end of my tenure the GSA has grown stronger, more inclusive and has heard more student voices. I sincerely hope the new executive carries on the good work that our organization needs and deserves.

Signing off,

Rajat Chakravarty

Outgoing Vice President Student Affairs

VP External Annual Report

This year has been an exceptionally eventful and turbulent year for the GSA. However, I am thankful for the chance to be a part of the GSA Executive and proud of the advocacy work and other duties that I have carried out. I am thankful for the support of the GSA Executive and Council members in my role as the VP External Affairs.

GSA Student Day Planners

In the Summer of 2014, I collaborated with the CFS Membership representative, Mr. Adam Awad to design the GSA student day planners and added a few pages of pertinent information regarding governmental services relevant to our grad students and current information on student movement in the country regarding tuition hikes and student debt. Judging from the random comment of students, the day planners were received well.

Committee Meetings

I was the graduate student representative on the following University committee.

Graduate Education Review Advisory committee (GERAC)

- This Committee was created to review the importance of CGSR as a body organizing Graduate Education. This body reviewed and discussed the centralized model and other models of organization of graduate education in other Canadian Universities. Furthermore, the current performance of the CGSR was reviewed as per the results of a survey sent to faculty. This committee was created in the wake of the Program prioritization that was carried out by the U of S called TransformUs. Upon suspension of the implementation of TransformUs, this committee was dissolved.

International Activities Committee (Highlights)

This year we discussed and gave feedback on the following issues:

- International Emergency Travel Plan: Currently being reviewed further to work well with existing University travel policies. The take home message here was that health and security risk assessment needs to be done before students and faculty are sent to any international location on affairs related to their studies.
- Concur training: feedback was given to the U of S Finance department to do more workshops on the Concur travel reimbursement system as current faculty and students are finding difficult to use.

Re-appointment Review Committee for Associate Dean of CGSR

- This committee was created to gather input from the University community on whether Dr. Trever Crowe should be re-appointed as an Associate Dean of CGSR for another 5 years. It had

a representative from the Provost's office, two Faculty reps and a student rep (VP External). In a span of 6 weeks and 5 meetings, the committee collected information through a general call out for comments on the performance of Dr. Crowe in the Associate Dean position and made a decision on reappointment. I encouraged and solicited comments from graduate students and the last two GSA VPs of Academic, who worked with Dr. Crowe, in order to establish a stand on whether graduate students feel he should be re-appointed or not. After the feedback and debate, Dr. Crowe was reappointed.

Executive Director, School of Public Health search committee

- The Selection committee for the next Executive Director of the School of Public Health (SPH) had members of the SPH faculty, a graduate student representative (VP External), and a headhunter and was chaired by the Provost. The first meeting held on Dec 22, 2014 discussed the position profile, the faculty and student expectation from the incumbent. It was agreed that there would be a town hall meeting to gather the expectations of the general SPH community from this position. Academic reviews of this position were also done. A town hall meeting with SPH students and the head-hunter was in the process of being arranged but are put on hold for the time being as there has been a hold put on any future meetings by the Chair till further notice. I will pay close attention to future meeting announcements. There has already been an agreement established in the committee that the town hall meeting will not include any SPH faculty members, including members of this committee to attend this meeting to allow students to speak freely without fear of repercussion.

GSA Constitution and Policy Review committee

- I first brought this committee members to be ratified to the October GSA Council meeting. Unfortunately the committee members were not ratified until the January 2015 Council meeting due to lack of quorum in several council meetings. The committee members met over February, March and April to compose three governance documents: Constitution, Bylaws and Policies. The main objectives set out by this committee were to make the governance documents clear of ambiguity and conflicting information with clear structure of authority and scope. With the generosity of the CGSR, we have been given a governance expert, Ms. Irene Seiferling, to work with. She will be reviewing our documents for a more productive feedback. We have circulated the proposed governance documents to the GSA members and have a Town Hall meeting scheduled for April 21st to get feedback and discuss questions from graduate students regarding the new documents. The final documents will be presented at the Annual General Meeting.

The 3rd Annual Graduate Awards Gala

- The 3rd Annual Graduate Awards Gala was held at the Radisson Hotel- Saskatoon on Saturday March 7, 2015. Approximately 310 people including students, performers, dignitaries and others guests attended the event. The total cost of the event was \$27,038.23. Similar to other years, \$5000 was budgeted in the GSA Annual budget for this event. \$21,825.00 was raised through Sponsorship and the rest was raised through ticket sales. We had 18 sponsors mostly Colleges and departments within the University. Unfortunately, our budget did not have room to hire a Gala Coordinator, which led to all of the work being done by me with a lot of help from the GSA Commons staff. There were 8 awards given out, 2 less than the year before. We had Trophies instead of Certificates as awards for a change. A selection committee of 5 members chose the winners of each category. The Entertainment, this year, included student performance of graduate students, which livened up the event and showed that graduate students are multi-talented and engaged. We also hired a photographer to cover the awards ceremony in addition to the Photo booth to document the award ceremony moments. We are thankful that our dignitaries The U of S President, Dr. Barnhart, the Hon. Minister of Education, Don Morgan and the Hon. Minister of State Affairs, Lynne Yelich attended our event. We were also honoured that our Keynote speaker, Dr. Monique Haakensen gave an inspiring speech to give us the tools and ideas to where to start after graduation. Overall, the Gala was received well and enjoyed by most who attended it. For more information, please refer to the *Graduate Awards Gala 2015 report*.

The Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) and Lobbying for Post-secondary issues

As a CFS liaison, I attended the following meetings and lobbying events.

The 65th Semi-annual General Meeting of the CFS (June 2014) where:

- We served an emergency motion asking help from other members of CFS to support us in stopping TransformUs by sending letters to the University of Saskatchewan administration and also the Government of Saskatchewan for increased funding to alleviate continuous tuition increase as stated by the former provost at the General Academic Assembly in April 2014. The letters were sent from the CFS National Office to the University of Saskatchewan administration and the Ministry of Advanced Education.

The GU15 Meeting (August 2014)

- This meeting had in attendance representatives from 12 Graduate student associations across Canada. In this meeting we discussed the issues of Tri-Council Funding, Indirect cost of Research, International Student Services and Annual Surveys to improve services being given

to members of our individual graduate student associations. We agreed to prepare data -based lobby documents to be presented to the Federal government in the coming years. The documents on indirect costs of research, student representation on the Tri-Council and Undergraduate student research internship have been so far reviewed and finalized.

The 33rd Annual Meeting of the Canadian Federation of Students

- I served a motion to add Aboriginal reps and International Student reps to the CFS-Saskatchewan Steering committee. The objective was to have a more coordinated effort of advocacy for Aboriginal students and International students in Saskatchewan and to advocate against barriers like differential tuition fees and to explore the barriers leading to the low enrolment of Aboriginal students in Saskatchewan. Unfortunately, the motion was not adopted because representatives from The University of Regina Students Union and the First Nations University Student Union voted it down in the Saskatchewan Component meeting.

CFS Lobby Week (November 2014)

- Every Year, the CFS organizes a Lobby week where members from different provinces meet in Ottawa and lobby with the Federal Government on different post-secondary issues. This year it was in the week of Nov18th – Nov 21st. I represented all students from Saskatchewan and spoke to SK MPs in Ottawa about creating a Post-secondary Act, similar to the Healthcare act where dedicated funding for post-secondary education is given to provinces from the Federal government to have a stable post-secondary funding for Universities. We also lobbied against targeted funding of research. The last point advocated for was to replace student loans with students grants to allow students to graduate with minimal debt which we demonstrated hampers their contribution to the Canadian economy based on the scarcity of good jobs available after graduation.

The Consent Forum

- In March 2015, I attended a Consent forum organized by the CFS to make Campuses safe for all students. We discussed how experiences of sexual assault by different groups differ and how sexual assault policies on campuses and the consent education should take that into consideration. This was especially important for our campus as we are in the middle of developing a sexual assault policy. I took notes on experiences of other campuses across Canada regarding inclusiveness of sexual assault policy development. I also documented the strategies being used to promote consent culture on University campuses. I have arranged to meet with Patti McDougall to share that information.

Executive Travel Fund Issue

In June 2014, President Vlahu and I attended the 65th Semi-annual General Meeting of the CFS in Ottawa. The travel was to be financed by the CFS for one delegate and the GSA was to finance the other. Unfortunately, neither the President nor me were aware that one delegate was paid for by the CFS and consequently paid the CFS for two delegates instead of one. We then requested for a refund however the CFS stated that our GSA owed the CFS an amount of \$787.65. As the letter attached explains, two delegates from last year's executive had attended the May 2013 CFS General meeting but hadn't paid for a delegate. Since there was no delegate from our GSA in November 2013, the CFS elected to collect the owed amount in June 2014. This lowered the annual travel fund budgeted for the GSA Executive from \$3000 to about \$2200.



CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS
FÉDÉRATION CANADIENNE DES ÉTUDIANT-E-S

Monday, April 20th 2015

Dear Ms. Osman,

Please find below a breakdown of outstanding delegate fees from Local 101, the University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Union. I have also attached a scanned copy of Ehimai Ohiozabau's registration form and travel booking information from May 2013, as per your request.

May 2013 GM:

Delegates: Steve Jimbo, Ehimai Ohiozabau
Total cost incurred: \$1575.30
Federation subsidy: (\$787.65)
Payment: \$0
Total Owing: \$787.65

Nov 2013 GM:

Delegates: n/a
Total cost incurred: \$0
Federation Subsidy: (\$0)
Payment: \$0
Total owing: \$787.65

June 2014 GM:

Delegates: Rahwa Osman, Izabela Vlahu (cancellation by Steve Jimbo)
Total cost incurred: \$1747.90
Federation subsidy: (\$834.70)
Payment: \$1,716.45
Total Owing: \$31.45

I hope you find this information useful. Please let me know if there is anything else that you need.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anna Dubinski'.

Anna Dubinski
National Treasurer

Campaign against Tuition Hikes

A **Poster Campaign** was organized in December 2014. The poster campaign involved using descriptive posters of what the effect of tuition hike is on students. We used pictures of a diverse group of students, each saying how this tuition hike affects them personally. The diverse group included different types of students: Domestic, International, and Parents students. It was organized to paint a picture of graduate students who can't afford to graduate and still meet their basic needs, build a brighter future without such high debt and how differential fees are affecting International graduate students. These posters were put up all across campus to be followed by a Town Hall meeting in April with the Minister of Advanced Education. Unfortunately, the Minister will not be available during the month of April. It is my hope that the newly elected VP External Affairs will continue with this momentum and organize a Town Hall meeting with the Minister to discuss Tuition Hikes and its effect on students in the U of S.

GSA Health and Dental Insurance fees

Historically, the GSA Health and dental fees were set and approved by the GSA Council in February of every year for the following Academic year. However, this year, the U of S Admin wanted all student fees including the GSA Health dental fees to be submitted in December. In effect, studentcare.net, which is our insurance broker worked on data collected between September and November to predict the following year's insurance activity. This created a risk of under-estimating or over-estimating the future premium to be set by SunLife Insurance. To avoid having the insurance coverage affected, The GSA Council approved a 15% increase in the health and dental fees to create enough room for error in prediction based on minimal data. We are currently working with the Provost's office to come up with a working plan that would allow us to predict insurance premiums in a multi-year Tuition rate framework.

Recommendations for next year

Although this is subject to approval by newly elected VP External, I would like to forward recommendations for the 2015- 2016 year.

- A follow up with the Ministry of Advanced Education to arrange a town hall meeting with the Minister of Advanced Education.
- With the Provincial and Federal Elections coming up, it would be great if debates were arranged with at least the major political parties in attendance regarding post-secondary education issues in Saskatchewan. I have spoken to Cam Broten, the leader of the SK NDP who is willing to participate in such a debate. This would allow students to get engaged in the Provincial and Federal elections and bring Post-secondary issues to the table.

Once again, I would like to thank the graduate students who elected me and gave me a chance to work on all our goals and achievements. I'd also like to thank the GSA Councillors and GSA Staff who were helpful in everything GSA-related that I was involved in. But most of all, I would like thank the GSA Executive members, whose team work and support made all the turbulence this year, manageable.

Graduate Students' Association Special General Meeting Minutes



University of Saskatchewan
Graduate Students' Association
Monday, January 12th, 2015
12:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Attendees:

Taraneh Kazerouni; Aaron Thacker; Brendan Sangler; Bassey Bassey; Kathryn Forrester; Venkat Palgat; Kiela Caupillo; Jeremy Marshall; Kyle Dase; Mohsen Mohkami; Robin Brown; Fengrei Zhang; Michelle Desveaux; Victoria Taras; Yina Liu; Jacques Desmarais; Kai Zhou; Andrei Ichazo; Andrew Frank-Wilson; Maryann Jafari Horestani; Devon Stumborg; Wesam Younis; Dallas Posavad; Kathleen Aikens; Kayla Lindenback; Jed Huntley; Glenn Icton; Madelaine Gierc; Christopher West; Ali Kiani; Vahid Vosoushi; Adehiyari Olwlaseyi ; Sheheryar B. Sheikh; Kota Kimura; Shakt Brazier Tompkins; David Bennett; Setareh Shahkarami; Phil Lagace; Natalia Terekhova; Naomi Malna; Austen Smith; Fred Sage; Erin Spinney; Balazs Toro; Adam Pierce; Julie Wang; Mibed Taghavivand; Dustin Maclean; Colin Gibbins; Qi Guo; Kimberly Lafreniere; Dustin McNichol; Warrick Baijius; Mangaliso Mohammed; Layla Gould; Cinnati Loi; Mohammad Rafati; Jason Ho.

Executives:

President, Izabela Vlahu;
VP Operations, Xin Lu;
VP Academic, Ranjan Datta.

1.0 Call to Order — 12:05pm

2.0 Approval of the Agenda

2.1 The agenda was adopted by the room.

3.0 Chair's remarks

3.1 The Chair pointed out that Motion 5.0 is out of order as it was defeated on November Council Meeting. However, the mover and seconder of the motion testified that the motion was never discussed in any meetings before. The motion is still in order.

4.0 Approval of the June 2nd Special General Meeting minutes (<http://goo.gl/oqslKs>)

4.1 37 in favour, 0 object, 1 abstain. The minutes for June 2nd Special General Meeting was adopted.

5.0 Motion Vlahu/Lu

WHEREAS section 4.3.2. of the GSA Constitution mandates the GSA Council to approve

the GSA fee for the next fiscal year at its December meeting, and

WHEREAS quorum was not reached at the December meeting,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT this Special General Meeting approves the 2015/16 GSA fee of \$33.65/term for full time students and \$19.27/term for part time students.

5.1 GSA fees must be approved every year at the December council meeting, unfortunately quorum was not reached. The university is late in approving the fees, because the time frame changed from the previous years they agreed to wait for a little bit and are giving us this weekend to approve the fees. These numbers have a 1.60 increase over the previous year and 90 cents for part time students. This accounts for inflation. The change is insignificant and within the constitution.

5.2 No objection for calling the question.

5.3 37 in favour, 1 objection, 6 abstain. The motion was adopted.

6.0 Motion McNichol/Desveaux

WHEREAS a significant number of graduate students at the University of Saskatchewan feel that their relationship with their employer is in need of improvement;

WHEREAS the University of Saskatchewan - Association of Graduate Employees (USASK-AGE) has been formed in order to work towards improvement of said relationship by unionizing graduate student employees of the university;

WHEREAS most graduate students are employees of the University of Saskatchewan, and will see positive improvements to their working conditions at the university if unionization is successful, and

WHEREAS a graduate student employees union would be in a legally-enforceable bargaining and advocating position with the University of Saskatchewan, and would offer protections for its members on issues pertaining to their Teaching and Research Assistance that the Graduate Students Association cannot, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Graduate Students Association (GSA) of the University of Saskatchewan offer its official endorsement of the ongoing union campaign being led by the USASK-AGE as a sign of good faith and commitment to shared goals.

6.1 In summer 2014, graduate students across departments got together and decided it was time to discuss forming a union. Number of work related issues that are being raised by grad students that are not being addressed by the university. Therefore, the USASK-Association of Graduate Employees (USASK-AGE) was formed. This is not a union but is a group that has its goal of unionization. Since October they have been working towards forming a union. They

approached a union line Public Service Lines of Canada who gave them a small budget for materials. Since October, they have collected over 500 signatures from grad student workers in support of the union initiative.

6.2 The benefit of Union: unions advocate on behalf of a certain group of workers in order to get better wages and better benefits and work protections better health and safety standards, standardized grievance procedures and standardized contracts. Things that clarify the relationship to the university as your employer.

6.3 The reason asking for official GSA endorsement is that the GSA endorsement is needed, and that a union would work with the GSA to benefit all graduate students. The union is more to have a legal bargaining mechanism for graduate student employees and the university. The GSA is not a trade union, so they are not legally entitled to bargain collectively on your behalf, whereas a union is. This is not asking for any money. It doesn't need any financial for the GSA. All work is done by volunteers. It just needs political and moral support.

6.4 A Guest from Sessional Lectures Union was invited to talk about what it would mean to be in a union.

6.5 The President pointed out that questions were asked earlier what the role of the GSA could be in this unionization. In terms of communications with the student body the GSA does not have a contact list of all the graduate students. We do not have the names of all graduate students. We get only numbers at the end. It is only a head count. The way we contact the grad student body is draft an email and send it to CGSR where they make sure it fits with their policies. The last email we sent had a link to the agenda. The link was removed as communications with the university did not want a link pointing to anything that mentions a union. So we are controlled in the information that we send to graduate students. We do what we can in the unionization drive not in terms of advocating for or against but in terms of facilitating the discussion. The meeting today was initiated by members of the GSA but does not represent an endorsement or a refusal by the GSA in any way. We are happy to provide forums for discussion if there is a need for addition forums.

6.6 38 in favour, 1 oppose, 5 abstain. The motion was adopted

7.0 Adjournment — 1:14 pm